

Message Text

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ACTION SCS-06

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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 419

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CASC (TAUL, JAMES)
SUBJECT: W/W JAMES TAUL

REF: STATE 62434

1. IN RESPONSE TO REFTEL, EMBASSY HAS CONDUCTED AN INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPLAINT BY JIM TAUL REGISTERED IN HIS LETTER TO CONGRESSMAN BUCHANAN. SINCE HE DID NOT FILL OUT REGISTRATION FORM, WE HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO LOCATE HIM IN ORDER TO ASCERTAIN DETAILS OF HIS COMPLAINT DIRECTLY FROM HIM. HOWEVER, OUR INQUIRY DISCLOSED THAT ONE OF A GROUP OF AMERICAN MEN VISITING THE EMBASSY A FEW WEEKS AGO WHO SPOKE TO AN AMERICAN USIS SECRETARY MAY HAVE BEEN MR. TAUL.

2. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION, RELATIVE TO THIS MATTER AND KEYED TO THE ASSERTIONS IN MR. TAUL'S LETTER, MAY BE USEFUL TO THE DEPARTMENT IN RESPONDING TO CONGRESSMAN BUCHANAN'S LETTER.

A. ALL EMBASSY VISITORS WHO ARE UNKNOWN TO OUR LOCALLY-HIRED ARAB GUARDS ARE ROUTINELY SEARCHED PRIOR TO ENTERING THE EMBASSY COMPOUND, WITH A HAND-HELD METAL DETECTOR IN A MOST COURTEOUS MANNER, AND ARE ASKED TO REVEAL HIDDEN METAL OBJECTS WHICH THEY ARE CARRYING. ALL BAGS, BOXES, PURSES AND BRIEFCASES CARRIED
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BY VISITORS UNKNOWN TO THE GUARDS ARE ROUTINELY SEARCHED BOTH BY THEM AND BY THE U.S. MARINE GUARD STATIONED IN THE EMBASSY LOBBY. THESE SEARCH PROCEDURES ARE CAREFULLY SUPERVISED BY THE EMBASSY REGIONAL SECURITY OFFICER AND HAVE BEEN REFINED OVER THE YEARS TO PRESENT THE LEAST POSSIBLE OFFENSE TO EMBASSY VISITORS, WHILE PROVIDING MAXIMUM FEASIBLE PROTECTION FOR EMBASSY VISITORS AND

EMPLOYEES FROM TERRORISTS. (DEPARTMENT IS AWARE OF ASSESSED RISK OF TERRORISM IN KUWAIT AND THE ELABORATE AND EXPENSIVE EQUIPMENT AND PROCEDURES WE EMPLOY TO PROTECT THE EMBASSY.)

B. OUR LOCALLY-HIRED EMPLOYEES, WHO NUMBER NEARLY 60 AND ARE LARGELY ARAB, ARE KNOWN TO THE GUARDS AND PASS FREELY THROUGH THE SINGLE GATE USED BY VISITORS AND EMBASSY STAFF ALIKE. THESE WERE UNDOUBTEDLY THE ARABS WHO WERE NOT SEARCHED. USE OF A SINGLE GATE FOR ALL MINIMIZES OUR PHYSICAL SECURITY RISK, THOUGH OF COURSE SOME PEOPLE GAIN ACCESS QUICKER THAN OTHERS, BECAUSE THEY ARE RECOGNIZED STAFF MEMBERS.

C. IT APPEARS THAT MR. TAUL VISITED THE CONSULAR SECTION DURING A RECENT FIVE-WEEK PERIOD WHEN IT HAD BEEN RELOCATED TEMPORARILY IN THE EMBASSY BASEMENT AUDITORIUM, A MOVE NECESSITATED BY REMODELING OF THE SECTION'S NORMAL LOCATION IN ORDER TO IMPROVE ITS SECURITY AND MAKE USE OF ITS SPACE MORE EFFICIENTLY. IN FACT, THE LESS THAN BRIGHT LIGHTS IN THE AUDITORIUM COULD BE SEEN AS "DINGY"--IT WAS NOT DESIGNED AS A WAITING ROOM--BUT IT IS FAR FROM A "LITTLE ROOM" SINCE IT WILL SEAT 70 PERSONS.

D. REGARDING MR. TAUL'S ALLEGATION OF A LACK OF SERVICE BY CONSULAR SECTION PERSONNEL, AS DISTINCT FROM UNCLASSIFIED

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"IMMEDIATE ATTENTION TO ARABS AT OUR EXPENSE," THE CONSULAR SECTION'S TEMPORARY LOCATION DID NOT PERMIT THE SEPARATE HANDLING OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. THE NEW CONSULAR SECTION INCLUDES A SEPARATE WINDOW RESERVED FOR AMERICAN CITIZENS ONLY. TO OVERCOME THIS LIMITATION, THE EMBASSY RECEPTIONIST WAS GIVEN INSTRUCTIONS TO DIRECT ANY U.S. CITIZENS TO THE CONSUL'S OFFICE LOCATED NEXT TO THE EMBASSY LOBBY. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT TAUL ESCAPED THE ATTENTION OF THE RECEPTIONIST AND FOLLOWED THE CONSULAR SECTION SIGN POINTING TO THE AUDITORIUM. HAD HE TAKEN A PLACE IN LINE, HE PROBABLY WOULD HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED QUICKLY AND PUT IN CONTACT WITH THE CONSUL OR HANDLED BEFORE ANYONE ELSE REGARDLESS OF HIS PLACE IN LINE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MR. TAUL WAS IN LINE AT ANY TIME. CONCERNING THE ABSENCE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE POSTERS TO WHICH MR. TAUL REFERS, THE EMBASSY DISPLAYS SEVERAL LARGE TRAVEL TO AMERICA POSTERS WITH ENGLISH CAPTIONS, PARTICULARLY ALONG THE STAIRS WHICH LED TO THE TEMPORARY CONSULAR SECTION. THE ARABIC SIGNS IN THE TEMPORARY CONSULAR SECTION AREA CONTAINED INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO APPLY FOR U.S. VISAS. SINCE AMERICANS DO NOT NEED U.S. VISAS, NO ENGLISH CAPTIONS WERE PROVIDED. THE INTERIOR OF THE EMBASSY ITSELF, INCLUDING THE LOBBY, IS LINED WITH LARGE PHOTOGRAPHS OF AMERICAN SCENES

TAKEN BY THE WELL-KNOWN AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHER, FRED MAROON, WHICH HAD BEEN USED IN A USIS EXHIBITION THAT TOURED THE GULF AREA.

E. EMBASSY IS UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE ASSERTION OF "COMPLETE LACK OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT BY THE STAFF." A USIS AMERICAN SECRETARY (USIS IS ADJACENT TO TEMPORARY CONSULAR LOCATION) RECALLS HAVING TALKED TO AN AMERICAN VISITOR (ACCOMPANIED BY THREE OTHER MEN) SOME WEEKS AGO WHO MAY HAVE BEEN MR. TAUL--HE COMPLAINED ABOUT THE POSTERS WITH ARABIC WRITING, "BETTER" CONDITIONS OF BRITISH EMB., AND HE SEEMED UPSET THAT THE AMERICAN EMBASSY PROVIDED NO ORGANIZED SOCIAL LIFE FOR AMERICAN RESIDENTS OF KUWAIT. HE REFUSED, HOWEVER, TO ACCEPT PRINTED MATTER ON THE VARIOUS ACTIVITIES
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OF UNOFFICIAL AMERICAN ORGANIZATIONS HERE. THE SECRETARY OFFERED TO PUT THIS INDIVIDUAL IN IMMEDIATE PERSONAL CONTACT WITH THE CONSUL OR THE EMBASSY ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER, SINCE,

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AS SHE NOW RECALLS, HE APPEARED TO HAVE A "CHIP ON HIS SHOULDER." THIS OFFER WAS ALSO REFUSED. THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICER, ON RETURNING FROM OUTSIDE CALL, SAW THE SAME GROUP LEAVING THE USIS/CONSULATE AREA AND WAS OF THE OPINION THAT THEY WERE MAKING OBNOXIOUS COMMENTS, BUT CANNOT RECALL THEIR SUBSTANCE.

F. REGARDING THE LACK OF A PERSONAL SEARCH OF

VISITORS AT THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN KUWAIT, THE BRITISH APPARENTLY ASSESS THEIR OWN RISK OF EXPOSURE TO TERRORISM AS LOWER THAN OUR OWN. THEY MAY BE RIGHT. IN RECENT YEARS, MORE AMERICANS HAVE BEEN LOST TO MURDERERS, BOMBERS AND KIDNAPPERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST THAN HAVE BRITONS.

3. THE EMBASSY REGRETS VERY MUCH THAT THIS SITUATION OCCURRED AND THAT MR. TAUL DID NOT HAVE THE COURAGE OF HIS CONVICTIONS TO PRESENT HIS COMPLAINT TO THE CONSUL OR THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER WHO COULD HAVE PROVIDED HIM PERSONALLY WITH THE INFORMATION DESCRIBED ABOVE. THE STAFF OF THIS EMBASSY STRIVES TO SERVE AMERICAN CITIZENS TO THE BEST OF ITS ABILITY WITHIN THE LIMITATIONS PRESCRIBED BY LAW AND REGULATION (AND SOMETIMES BEYOND), BUT IT DOES NOT REGARD SUCH CITIZENS AS ITS "PAYMASTERS," SINCE THE AMERICAN MEMBERS ALL PAY TAXES TO SUPPORT THE ACTIVITIES OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, PERHAPS--UNTIL RECENT UNCLASSIFIED

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TAX LEGISLATION--IN A GREATER DEGREE THAN AMERICANS PRIVATELY EMPLOYED OVERSEAS. MOREOVER, IF MR. TAUL WERE THE INDIVIDUAL OBSERVED BY USIS PERSONNEL, THE DESCRIPTION OF "UNMANNERLY AND UNCOUTH" MIGHT BE APPROPRIATELY APPLIED TO SUCH BEHAVIOR.

4. COMMENT: THE AMBASSADOR HAS, IN FACT, RECEIVED MANY COMPLIMENTS FROM MANY AMERICAN CITIZENS ON THE TREATMENT ACCORDED THEM BY THE CONSUL AND THE CONSULAR SECTION. MAESTRONE

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